



For Immediate Release
November 10, 2007
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Alwaiya Children's Hospital renovations nearly complete

By Norris Jones
Gulf Region Central District



Dr. Talib Hassan, Alwaiya Children's Hospital Deputy Administrator, and Col. Robert J. Vasta with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, discuss the final steps needed to complete the renovation work at that medical facility. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)

BAGHDAD, Iraq – After three years of cramped conditions, Alwaiya Children's Hospital patients will soon see a marked improvement.

To keep that important facility open, medical staff and patients crowded into half the structure so construction crews could completely renovate the other half.

As work progressed, they switched places.

The \$2.86 million project now nearing completion involves modernizing the 6,000-sq.-meter, 144-bed facility including a new water purification system, new mechanical system (both air conditioning and heating), medical waste incinerator, oxygen plant and central vacuum system,

nurse call system, intercom paging system, data communications network, new toilets, showers and sinks, new exhaust system to remove unhealthy air and odors, a new generator for emergency power, new lighting, and structural repair.

"The original building was over six decades old and the Iraqi contractor stripped the walls down to the bare bricks and then started the renovation work including new electrical and plastering," said Mohammad Jabbar, the Iraqi project engineer overseeing the work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "This hospital takes care of the poorest people in Baghdad. The medical staff was working in miserable conditions. Alwaiya Children's Hospital is now providing health care at the same high standard as private hospitals in Baghdad," he continued.

"It touches your heart every time you walk through the door and it's great to see these youngsters benefitting from this effort. It comes down to the basics of humanity and helping save people's lives. The doctors and nurses here are now using equipment that was simply not available to them three years ago," he added.

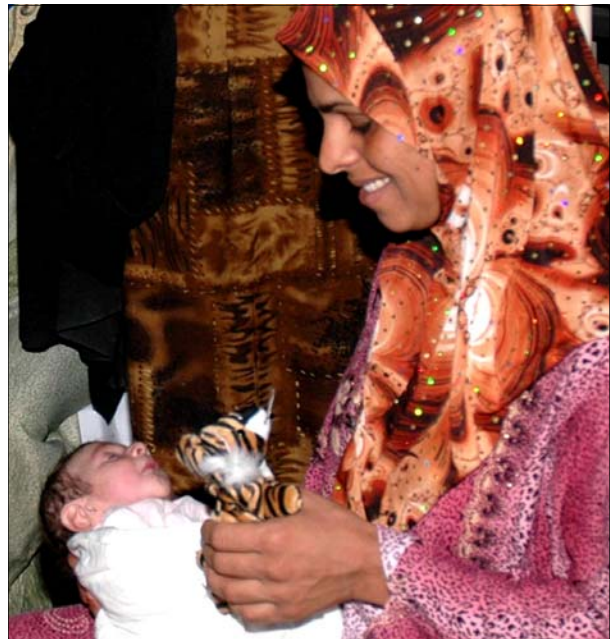
Dr. Talib Hassan, the hospital's deputy administrator, said he is pleased with the work. "Our hospital was old and needed new equipment. We still have a few more repairs to do but we look forward to finishing and putting the entire facility to good use."

The hospital sees 350 patients daily ranging from newborns to age 14. Most are cared for as outpatients but about 40 of those must be admitted for further treatment. Most common ailments are gastro-intestinal illnesses due to unclean water and flu/respiratory problems that increase during the winter months. Currently, the medical staff consists of 41 doctors and 40 nurses.

Col. Robert J. Vasta with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers complimented Dr. Hassan and his staff for the awesome care they provide Baghdad's youngsters. "The doctors and nurses here are real heroes. They make the difference. They put their lives at risk to take care of Iraq's most



One of the Iraqi youngsters whose family is seeking medical care at Alwaiya Children's Hospital. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)



An Iraqi mother seeks medical care for her newborn at Alwaiya Children's Hospital in Baghdad. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)

vulnerable citizens.”

During a trip to Alwaiya Children’s Hospital Nov. 7, Col. Vasta’s executive secretary, Hunter Logan, brought several boxes of donated items. “Fortunately, we have a number of people back in the United States who send us donations on a regular basis – toddler clothing, toys, school supplies, blankets. It was a very special mo-

ment handing out those items...touching the lives of the youngsters. Our renovation work is helping the medical staff treat those children. It was great to see how it’s all coming together.”

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently overseeing the renovation of five major hospitals in Baghdad.

Note: Norris Jones is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Gulf Region Central district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact him at 544-665-2644 or email requests to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.